

**TYPES OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS OF ENGLISH  
NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**Written by**

**SULISTYANI HIDAYATI**

**NIM : S200110048**

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**TYPES OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS OF ENGLISH NATIONAL  
EXAMINATION FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN YEAR 2011 - 2015**

Written by:

**SULISTYANI HIDAYATI**  
**NIM : S200110048**

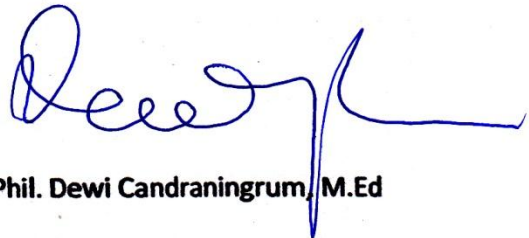
Publication script has been approved by:

**First Advisor**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large circular loop and several sharp, angular strokes.

**Prof. Dr. Endang Fauziati, M.H**

**Second Advisor**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long, horizontal tail stroke.

**Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum, M.Ed**

## **TYPES OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS OF ENGLISH NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

By: Sulistyani Hidayati  
sulistyanihidayati27@gmail.com

### ***Abstract***

Sulistyani Hidayati, Types of Reading Comprehension Questions of English National Examination for Senior High School Students. Thesis. Magister of English Language Study. Post Graduate Program. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. 2015.

*This research has the objectives to: 1) unearth the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination in year 2011 – 2015; 2) reveal the frequency of each type of questions of English national examination in year 2011 – 2015; and 3) illustrate the differences and similarities of types of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015.*

*The type of the research is qualitative research. This research uses content analysis because it takes the content of the items in English final examination. The main data source is the document of English National Examination for senior high school from 2011 to 2015. The data of the research is the test items of English National Examination for senior high school from 2011 to 2015. The technique of collecting the data used documentary technique.*

*The analysis is focused on the English reading comprehension questions that were written in multiple choice form. This research applies constant comparative method which compares the data or the categories with the other one constantly.*

*The conclusion of the research is that the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students of year 2011 – 2015 reveals that there are 6 types of reading comprehensions questions used in English national examination of 2011 to 2015, they are: vocab in context, inferential comprehension, function, literal comprehension, specific and evaluation. Based on the theory of reading comprehensions questions of GMAT and Barret's taxonomy, the types of reading comprehensions questions used in English national examination of 2011 to 2015 are less of variations of question types. There is a significant difference of frequency of each type of reading comprehension questions of each year. The most frequently tested of the question type from 2011 to 2015 is the inferential type of questions. In the second place is literal comprehension. The vocab in context has the third position of number of cases. The function, the specific and the evaluation types are fewer tested in the items test. There are differences and similarities among the types of reading question types of 2011 to 2015. The differences are lied on: 1) The frequency of the number of cases; 2) The number of cases distribution of*

*question types are not balanced of each year. The similarities among of them are: 1) Aspects of the question types; 2) The dominant of question types tested of each year. The balancing of the frequency and number of cases distribution is better in arranging the question items test.*

*Keywords: reading comprehension, reading questions types, national examination.*

## **1. Introduction**

The teaching of English has become progressively substantial as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is an obligatory subject to be taught for three years at Junior High Schools and for three years in Senior High Schools. English also has been taught in Elementary Schools as an optional subject as the implementation of the 1994 Curriculum. It appears that the development of English language teaching in Indonesia hints the current English curriculum objectives. The general standard objectives of English language teaching at Senior High Schools in Indonesia are determined as follows: (1) Developing communicative competence both in oral and in written in order to reach the level of informational literacy; (2) Raising awareness of the nature of English as a foreign language in order to compete with other countries in global community; and (3) Developing comprehension of students about the relation between language and culture (*Depdiknas RI, 2006*).

In Indonesia, the teaching of English (either it is considered as a second or foreign language) is closely tied to the teaching and learning of the skills hold. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As one of the skills, reading is one of the aspects noted as a part of significant ability in extending readers' viewpoints, giving them a chance to comprehend the world. Reading ability can empower the readers to take control of their own information and further to elect their future.

In this research, the writer only focuses on reading skill. Reading skill provides some crucial contributions in learning English. Brown stated that reading plays an important role in everyday life of human being. A fact

showing that reading is essential is the existence of visual media which operates its function by using written words (Brown, 2004 in Merina, 2009). The students may get strength to increase their ability of listening, speaking and writing skills through reading. They can also multiply their knowledge of speaking expression, English sentence structure, the English guidance of the text, writing techniques and increasing their vocabulary all the way through reading.

The teaching of reading as a foreign language (EFL reading) in Indonesia can be commonly included in the teaching of reading comprehension. This is because it objectives to improve the skills of learners, who have been able to read in the first language and in EFL, in appreciative the meaning of a written text. Moreover in English learning, four skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are distributed into two functions, language input or receptive skills and language output or productive skills. Reading is one of receptive skills. Receptive skill is the way in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear. It is a kind of processing in which people apply to both reading and listening. Productive skill the way that people have acquired and produce a message through speech or written text that they want others to understand. Reading and listening skills are included in receptive skills and speaking and writing skills are included in productive skills (Sharma, 2015).

The types of reading comprehension questions are interesting and important to be studied because there are many uses to help students respond to a variety of types of comprehensiontest that are very crucial to get success in passing on their national examination test. Therefore, the researcher decided to formulate the study entitled **“TYPES OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS OF ENGLISH NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS”**

### **1.1. Reading Comprehension**

Rosenshine (1980: 62) states that reading comprehension commonly entails seven skills, namely, recognizing the sequence, recognizing words in context, identifying main ideas, decoding details, drawing inferences, recognizing cause and effect and comparing and contrasting. This composition of reading comprehension can be compared to products or outputs attained through reading activities which consist of reading along the lines, reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines. Recognizing sequence and words in context, decoding details, and sometimes identifying main ideas can be classified as activities of reading along the lines; drawing inferences and recognizing cause and effect are categorized as parts of reading between the lines, while contrasting and comparing and giving an evaluation or personal judgments are activities of reading beyond the lines.

There are two aspects of reading comprehension, that are, human information processing and reading activity.

#### **1) Human Information Processing**

How the human mind handles information can be briefly described as follows: Incoming sensory information is held literally in sensory stores, and information from the permanent memory is retrieved for organizing it. Then, the identified information is judged by its relevance to the current activities; to be selected or not selected for further processing. Selected information is kept temporarily in the working memory since the contents of working memory keep changing as sensory stores keep functioning. Selected information is sent to the permanent or the long term memory. The permanent memory holds all information from the past which is not currently active and uses it to interpret new experiences which, in turn, may later be added to the permanent memory.

There are some process of human information:

(1) Sensory Store

Sensory store is a place where information is temporarily stored. When information is temporarily stored in sensory stores and short term memory, activities such as scanning, searching, comparing and integrating may relate it to other information in the long term memory to result in comprehension (Nagle and Sanders, 1986: 17).

(2) Working Memory

Working memory is often called episodic memory. It keeps traces of events that are specific to a time and a place. This memory is used to keep records of personal experience.

(3) Permanent Memory

The permanent memory itself can be distinguished into semantic and episodic memory. Semantic memory refers to the organized knowledge of words, concepts, symbols and objects. This memory holds all information regardless of the particular time or place of the information. In order to understand the reading comprehension process, theories on human information processing should be related to theories of reading and discourse comprehension, since reading activities deal with information presented in sentences which are supposed to be related in some ways in a piece of discourse.

2) Reading Activity

Alderson (2000: 12) states that reading is commonly viewed as consisting of decoding and comprehension activities of written verbal stimuli. Decoding activities refer to word recognition activities, whereas comprehension activities consist of activities to parse sentence, to understand sentences in discourse, to build a discourse structure, and to integrate what is understood from the discourse with what a reader

already knows.

In reading the readers will deal with materials, process, and product. With materials, the readers decode the information from the author. In the process, the readers transfer the information from the text, using their background experience, linguistic competence, etc. In the product, the readers gain the information they want. This means that the more the read, the more information they gain. According to Burn (1999: 66-69), reading activities include: (1) Sensory Activity, (2) Perceptual Activity, (3) Sequential Activity, (4) Experiential Activity, (5) Thinking, (6) Learning, (7) Association, (8) Affective, and (9) Constructive.

### **1.2. Types of Reading Comprehension Questions**

National examination is held every year. All teachers who teach National Examination subjects will be very busy to prepare it, including English teachers. They hope that their students will get success and able to do the test well. One of the important things to do by the teachers is knowing the types of the questions will raise on the test, so it will be easy to them to teach the students what should be learned to face the test. For analyzing it, it will be related to the theory about the types of questions in reading comprehension test. It takes the important factor in measuring the teaching learning process, besides the educational curriculum.

Regardless of the level of comprehension or the form of the question, teachers and materials developers need to make sure that the questions are used to help students interact with the text. This can be done by making sure that students keep the text in front of them while answering questions on the text. They should always be able to refer to the reading passage, for we are interested in teaching reading comprehension, not memory skills (Day, 2005). Furthermore, Gurus (2013) speaks out that there are 7 types of reading comprehension



questions: Universal, Specific, Vocab-in-Context, Function, Inference, Application, and Tone that will be discussed for the next chapter. The types of reading comprehension questions are interesting and important to be studied because there are many uses to help students respond to a variety of types of comprehension test that are very crucial to get success in passing on their national examination test.

The types of Reading Comprehension Questions among the three theories, therefore to avoid the overlapping meaning, the writer only takes GMAT Gurus and Barret theories by mixing them of the different points s: (1) Vocab in Context, (2) Inferential comprehension, (3) Function, (4) Literal Comprehension, (5) Specific, and (6) Evaluation.

The problem of the research is: “What are the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 - 2015?” From the research problem, it will appear some research questions: 1) What are the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015?; 2) What is frequency of each type of questions of English national examination for senior high school student in year 2011 – 2015?; and 3) What are the differences and similarities of types of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015?

## **2. Research Methods**

The writer uses the qualitative research as the type of the research, and the design is content analysis. This research uses content analysis because it takes the content of the items in English final examination. This research was conducted to try to describe and explain what are the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015. The main data source is the document of English National Examination for senior high school from 2011 to 2015. The

data of the research is the test items of English National Examination for senior high school from 2011 to 2015. The analysis is focused on the English reading comprehension questions that were written in multiple choice form. The writer takes an English test package of each year. There are 152 items test that will be analyzed.

The most useful ways of gathering these forms of data are participant observation, in-depth interviews, group interviews and the collection of relevant documents. In this study, the researcher applies the documentation techniques of collecting data used in this research are: 1) The researcher looks for the data of English national examination for senior high school students from 2011 to 2015 by browsing from the internet and school documents; 2) The researcher collects the data by taking the English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015; 3) The researcher selects the items by taking only the reading comprehension questions items test; 4) The researcher makes the list of data to classify the test items based on types of reading comprehension questions. The data is validated using source triangulation. The researcher compares the data she found in the some documents to validate the data. After analyzing the data of National Examination's reading comprehension text to comprehend, the researcher does cross checking by comparing them to the theories and related documents.

### **3. `Research Findings and Discussion**

All teachers would probably agree that the primary reason for reading text is to understand it. This statement has been proved by Smith (1967:185), who said that “reading without comprehension is not reading and it (reading) is the ability to recognize, to pronounce, and to understand the printed symbols on a page”. In other words, reading is the process of reconstructing an author’s ideas and deriving meaning from a printed page through the

ability to recognize printed words, knowledge of language, and previous reading and life experiences.

In line with the first research question : “What are the types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students in year 2011 – 2015?” There are three theories of types of comprehensions questions delivered by three scientists as explained in chapter 2 that are from GMAT, Richard R. Day et al and Barret’s. Nevertheless in this research, the writer only takes two theories conducted by GMAT Gurus and Barret in order to avoid the overlapping in analyzing it. The writer uses the mixing theories of both of them. Actually there are seven types of reading questions by GMAT, they are: universal, specific, vocab in context, function, inference, application, and tone. Meanwhile, according to Barret’s taxonomy, there are five types of reading comprehension: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential, evaluation, and appreciation. Yet, in this research the writer finds that there are 6 types of reading comprehensions questions used in English national examination of 2011 to 2015, they are: vocab in context, inferential comprehension, function, literal comprehension, specific and evaluation. The three of the questions types comes from GMAT such as: vocab in context, function, and specific types. While another types that are inferential, literal comprehension, and evaluation types belong to Barret’s taxonomy.

There are three types of reading comprehension questions used among seven types stated of GMAT, and there are only three types among five types of questions from Barret’s comprehension questions. It can be seen that there are a lot of variations of each question types. The type of the inferential is the most dominant tested in *UAN* of 2011 to 2015. It covers 33 items of the total reading items. The second order is the type of the literal comprehension types. It reaches 18 questions items. The type of the vocab in context is 6 items. The function type is 4 items. The specific type is rarely used in the

English *UAN*. It can be found only 2 items. In the last place is the evaluation type. It is the least items discovered in English *UAN* for five years.

The second of research question is “What is frequency of each type of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school student in year 2011 – 2015?” This question is focused on how the frequency of each type of reading comprehension question which is covers in the English national examination for senior high school student in year 2011 – 2015.

Analysis result shows that in year 2011 the type of inferential question is the most frequently tested in reading comprehension that is 18 items. Meanwhile vocab in context type has the second place that is 8 items. The type of literal comprehension has seven items, then function type has three items. There is no items can be found on specific and evaluation types in this case.

The most frequently tested of the question type from 2011 to 2015 is the inferential type of questions. In fact, not all the type of reading comprehension question tested each year. It can be seen from the table clearly. The type of the function, specific and evaluation were rarely used. Even the function type was just found in 2011 and 2013, the specific type was found in 2013 and 2014, and the evaluation was only found in 2012. The percentage of the number of question types can be seen obviously that the most frequently tested of 2011 to 2015 is the inferential type. Among others are less frequently tested, even they do not cover up in some English national examination. Besides, the writer also observes the differences and similarities of the question types of English national examination of 2011 to 2015.

Reading is a skill and there are many strategies to learn reading, and many factors affect reading comprehension. There have been many studies about reading, but they were merely studies which study reading specifically, such as a study about reading comprehension question types. This research is

similar with Afia's (2008) entitled "The Study of Morphemes Used in National Examination's Reading Comprehension Text". Her study presents the English bound morphemes are used in National Examination's reading comprehension texts and how bound morphemes are used in National Examination's reading comprehension texts. The result of the study showed that the kinds of morphemes are used in National Examination's reading comprehension texts are: inflectional suffix /-ed,-s (plural), -s (third singular plural), -'s (possessive), -er, -est, -ing and -en/. Derivational prefix /re-, dis-, a-, and in-/ derivational suffix /-ion, -er, or, -ly, -ment, -al, -ed, -ful, -ive, -ty, -y, -ist, -ity, -ing, -an, and -ancy/ beside that the writer find both prefix and suffix (circumfixes) such as; /multi- + -al, Multi- + -al, + -ism, inter- + -al/. The first research dealt with an analysis about English National Final Exam (UAN) For Junior High School viewed from School Based Curriculum (KTSP). Both of them analyzed the items of English National Final Exam (UAN), however the subject of the research was for Junior High School items while in current research investigated for senior high school one. The difference is lied down on the aspect used in the research. The current research used different aspect to reveal the research namely types of reading comprehension questions, while the first research used aspect to show the result of the analysis that is School Based Curriculum (KTSP). For that reason, the current research is to complete for the first one.

Merina's research (2009) "Analyzing the multiple-choice items of the reading test in Senior High School National Examination. The purposes of the research are (1) discovering whether the multiple-choice reading items of the National Examination test for senior high school students measured the objectives of English reading skills as stated in KTSP, (2) discovering whether the texts used in the National Examination test for senior high school students represented the written text types mentioned in KTSP, (3) discovering whether the question types used in multiple-choice reading items of the

national examination test for senior high school students measured the students comprehension through various question types.

The result of the research revealed that the national examination items measured the first Basic Competence related to students' reading comprehension to the meaning of the short functional text and the second Basic Competence related to students' reading comprehension to the meaning of the simple essays. However there were no items which measured the second Basic Competence related to students' understanding toward the rhetorical steps of the simple essays. Furthermore, based on Anderson Taxonomy theory (2001) the items measuring reading comprehension only measured two cognitive processes of the taxonomy, *remember* and *understand*. It was not appropriate with the requirements mentioned in KTSP that all the cognitive processes should be achieved.

Gocer's research's (2014) "The Assessment of Turkish Written Examination Questions Based on The Text in Accordance with The Barrett's Taxonomy". The objectives of this research was to determine the taxonomic distribution of the written examination questions used in measuring students' acquisition of reading comprehension in Turkey, and to make a number of suggestions designed in accordance with the results obtained. The findings revealed that a written exam questions used to determine students' reading comprehension skills are concentrated stage of simple understanding in the Barrett's Taxonomy, the steps of meeting the re-organizing and the satisfaction was not enough. The distribution of the written examination questions in according to Barrett's Taxonomy sublevels is not balanced. The position of the current research is to extend some previous researches that have been conducted

Based on the research findings and theories review above, It is also well accepted that there are several levels of comprehension and different question types designed to gauge each of these levels. Literal questions asses

directly stated facts, ideas and details (Collins, 2004); inferential questions on the other hand require the reader to develop a situation model and integrate pieces of information presented in the text to each other or combining previous knowledge with the information from the passage. Critical questions test the learner's ability to apply information deduced from a text to solve higher cognitive problems. Beyond the failure to understand the nature of the reading process and a host of other reader characteristics such as fluency, working memory, background knowledge and the use of reading strategy which have all been linked to reading comprehension, studies have been in consistent.

Besides, it is also important to consider such factors as text types as it is also true that the type of text such as narrative, descriptive, argumentative or expository to some extent affect a reader's level of comprehension.

#### **4. Conclusion, Pedagogical Implication and Suggestions**

The types of reading comprehension questions of English national examination for senior high school students of year 2011 – 2015 reveals that there are 6 types of reading comprehensions questions used in English national examination of 2011 to 2015, they are: vocab in context, inferential comprehension, function, literal comprehension, specific and evaluation. The writer uses the mixing theories of both of GMAT and Barret's taxonomy. Actually there are seven types of reading questions by GMAT, they are: universal, specific, vocab in context, function, inference, application, and tone. While, according to Barret's taxonomy, there are five types of reading comprehension: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential, evaluation, and appreciation. It means that based on the theory of reading comprehensions questions of GMAT and Barret's taxonomy, the types of reading comprehensions questions used in English national examination of 2011 to 2015 are less of variations of question types.

There is a significant difference of frequency of each type of reading comprehension questions of each year. The most frequently tested of the question type from 2011 to 2015 is the inferential type of questions. In the second place is literal comprehension. The vocab in context has the third position of number of cases. The function, the specific and the evaluation types are fewer tested in the items test.

There are differences and similarities among the types of reading question types of 2011 to 2015. The differences are lied on: 1) The frequency of the number of cases. 2) The number of cases distribution of question types are not balanced of each year. While the similarities among of them are: 1) Aspects of the question types, 2) The dominant of question types tested of each year. The balancing of the frequency and number of cases distribution is better in arranging the question items test.

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